



Wisconsin Council of REACT Teams

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SECRETARY
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554

REFERENCE RM-9499

The Tandy Corporation has filed documents requesting that certain portions of the General Mobile Radio Service, Part 95A, be delicensed and be considered a "Family Radio Service", utilizing the "Interstitial" 462 and 467 Mhz channels, as well as the 462/467 Mhz pair. Transceivers would be limited to one-half watt power, and would be mass marketed to the public.

The entire concept is merely another attempt by "Big Business" to create another market for consumers, with no regard for existing users, many of whom have invested significant dollars in equipment. Similar ideas were proposed in RM-4782 and again in PR Docket 86-38, although the Commission ruled that the GMRS should remain intact.

The problems which existed ten years ago are the same problems faced by the radio user or repeater operator today. PR Docket 86-38 limited severely the operation by commercial users, giving preference to the personal and family user who desired some form of legitimate, controlled communications. The Citizens Radio Service, since delicensing in the mid-70s, has become unmanageable, and is not a viable option to the majority of radio users. Many do not have the available time nor desire to obtain an amateur radio license. The General Mobile Radio Service is the more practical alternative for the family, or public service volunteers.

Allowing unlicensed users to operate freely would allow commercial operators access to the very frequencies protected by the Commission in 1987. Even now, since Tandy employees are stating that A GMRS LICENSE IS NOT REQUIRED FOR OPERATION, consumers are treating the service as simply another CB radio, using profanity, or non-existent radio protocol as the normal operating procedure. Only the licensing process is available to prevent commercial users from dominating the channels.

Tandy claims, in the petition, that the low power transmitters would not cause undue interference with existing stations. However, most of the equipment in use consists of 1-to-3 watt handheld transceivers. In other words, the equipment would be comparable to that in use already, and the non-interference concept would depend entirely upon the unlicensed user's willingness to NOT cause interference to the licensed user. If Tandy believes that unlicensed users would cease operation when they are told that they are causing interference, they should monitor any of the Citizens Radio Service channels.

Affiliated with: REACT International, Inc.
An independent non-profit public service organization providing organized personal use two-way radio communications in local emergencies.

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Tandy has suggested that unlicensed users be allowed access to the network of 462/467, 675 Mhz repeaters available for emergencies and motorists assistance. While few repeater operators would begrudge access to the emergency network, all would visualize some form of access control, and some form of restrictions. Licensing is the simplest form of that control. The Tandy Corporation also doesn't seem to realize that both individuals and public service organizations own and maintain the repeaters in the GMRS bands, and communications are not limited to strictly emergencies. Does Tandy expect access to these repeaters by unlicensed users for general communications?


Tandy also has requested a review, by the Commission, of the means used to access these "675" repeaters. While most 675 repeaters use some form of subaudible tone control, and nearly all transceivers are capable of the encode/decode functions necessary to access and/or receive communications, it is interesting to note that the low cost transceivers manufactured and sold by Tandy are not capable of transmitting the necessary subaudible tones. Is there some form of hidden interest here?

As more repeaters enter the coverage on the "675" pair, some form of control becomes more and more necessary in order to prevent the repeaters themselves from interfering with each other, and rendering the entire concept useless, yet Tandy wants the control removed.

The Wisconsin Council of REACT Teams, along with REACT and other public service teams in Illinois, uses GMRS on the 462/467 Mhz pair during severe weather, interfacing with amateur communications, police authorities and the National Weather Service, to form a communications network extending from north central Wisconsin to forty miles south of Chicago. Would Tandy have us believe that unlicensed users would NOT interfere with that weather net? Should we deactivate the net simply because Tandy wishes to sell more radios?

REACT Teams in Wisconsin, and across the nation, interact with the American Red Cross to provide assistance in disasters. In many cases, REACT IS the communications link for the Red Cross. REACT Teams, using GMRS, provide communications for marathons, for Special Olympics, for bike-a-thons, for canoe races, for search and rescue. Can Tandy assure these organizations that the unlicensed users will not cause interference?

It was proven years ago that licensed and unlicensed operations in the same radio service is unworkable and unmanageable. That mistake should NOT be repeated. The Tandy proposal should be rejected as simply another bid to create more radio sales.


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